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LIFE

A CONTRIBUTION TO HISTORY
Governor Connally sets the record
straight on the fateful visit

WHY KENNEDY WENT TO TEXAS



The Kennedys and Connallys in San Antonio, Nov. 21

Together with unpublished pictures
by nine bystanders

LAST SECONDS OF THE MOTORCADE



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On the next 17 pages LIFE presents two insights into the tragedy that took place in Dallas four years ago this week. The governor of Texas, who accompanied President Kennedy throughout the fateful visit, sets the record straight on a controversial and widely misreported aspect of the

event. LIFE has previously published the famous Zapruder film, showing the actual assassination. Here, on pages 87-97, is a portfolio of hitherto unpublished pictures, taken by bystanders, of the last moments of the motorcade in Dallas and then the return to the White House in Washington.

by JOHN CONNALLY

Governor of Texas

I might as well be blunt about this. I was not anxious for President Kennedy to come to Texas. For a year and a half he had sought the trip that ended so savagely on the afternoon of Nov. 22, 1963. The national pain and trauma that followed his death have produced the Kennedy legend, and I suppose it is natural that, in the growth of the legend, the real purposes and circumstances of his trip have been largely obscured. Now I want to set the record straight.

The fact is that President Kennedy wanted to visit Texas with two distinct purposes in mind. The first was to raise funds. The second was to improve his own political position in a state that promised to be critical in the election of 1964. He wanted me, as governor, to arrange the trip for him, but for good personal reasons I had been delaying it.

The day came, in June 1963, however, when President Kennedy invited me to his hotel suite in El Paso, and I knew I had exhausted my running room. I did not know the President intimately, but I liked him, had served as Secretary of the Navy early in his administration and counted him a friend. He was cordial, as always, with that reserve which was his characteristic, and he seemed in a good mood. He had flown from Washington for visits in Colorado and New Mexico and had stopped in El Paso: there had been a motorcade and now he was turning with easy relish to one of the most practical aspects of domestic politics.

When I walked in, he was smiling lightly and it was obvious that he had been ribbing Vice President Johnson gently and, I thought, with affection.

"Well, Lyndon," he asked, "do you think we're ever going to have that fund-raising affair in Texas?"

The question was directed to Mr. Johnson but the bite was intended for me. Texas was honored to have a native son on the national ticket and by the same token it was obligated to support that ticket financially. I knew that my delaying tactics, though entirely valid, had brought the Vice President some needless. Now he threw the ball to me.

"Mr. President," Mr. Johnson said, with

CONTINUED

Why Kennedy Went to Texas

a side glance at me, "you have the governor here. Maybe now you can get a commitment out of him."

Both men were looking at me and, though they were smiling and it was friendly and relaxed in the room, I was fully aware of the force of the White House.

"Mr. President," I said, "fine—let's start planning your trip."

To understand what was at stake, some background is in order. The genesis of President Kennedy's trip was pragmatic and quite natural. Campaign funds are the fuel of politics and it was important to begin raising money before the heat of the 1964 race began. The national committee was \$4 million in debt and yet Texas, a key state because of Mr. Johnson's place on the ticket, had contributed little since 1960. As we talked in El Paso that evening, I recall the President saying, "If we don't raise funds in another state, I want to do so in Massachusetts and Texas; if we don't carry another state next year, I want to carry Texas and Massachusetts." This was a point of both pride and concern to the President. The national ticket had taken Texas' 24 electoral votes (now 25) in 1960 only by a minute fraction—46,233 votes out of more than two million cast—and its position had hardly improved since.

Mr. Kennedy and Texas enjoyed a special relationship. It had begun in 1956 when Texas strongly supported him for the vice presidential nomination and thus helped convince him that his religion need not be an insurmountable barrier in the great Protestant states. And then there had been the day in 1960 when Mr. Kennedy offered Mr. Johnson second place on the ticket. I was Mr. Johnson's campaign manager in Los Angeles. With breakfast forgotten, coffee cups stacked on tables and the air heavy with tobacco smoke, we had reasoned out the situation. During the discussion, Mr. Johnson said very little. A deliberate, almost somber calm came over him. I had not seen him before so deeply in this mood, but I have seen it often since he has become President. Normally he dominates any conversation, and all his listeners. He is restless, confident, persuasive. But when faced with a great decision, he changes. He falls silent, almost brooding. He questions without revealing his thoughts. All of his energy appears focused on the decision.

As the discussion wore on, we came to understand that Mr. Johnson had no alternative but to accept the vice presidential nomination. He agreed and thus had forged another link that bound Mr. Kennedy to Texas. But it had not been an easy decision. I remember Mrs. Johnson in tears at one point. She knew the sense of dismay their friends and supporters would feel.

It is difficult now to convey these people's shock. They had committed themselves, emotionally and intellectually, to Mr. Johnson's campaign for the Presidency itself. For him to join Mr. Kennedy at the end seemed like going over to the enemy. Oddly enough, the

best expression of the feelings that so many Texans shared had come from an Oklahoman. Senator Robert Kerr, a courtly man and a gentleman, caustic at times but not given to violent expression, burst into Mr. Johnson's suite and shouted, "Lyndon, if you do this thing, I'll personally shoot you right between the eyes."

I think there is no doubt that the Democrats would have lost in 1960 without Mr. Johnson on the ticket. At home in Texas, however, this fact had a paradoxical result for Mr. Johnson. Texas is essentially a conservative state. General Eisenhower carried it in 1952 and in 1956. It had become fashionable to vote Republican nationally and Democratic locally. A great many Texans had been for Mr. Nixon for President and Mr. Johnson for senator—and their favorite senator had tipped the scales against their presidential favorite.

Mr. Johnson actually ran two races in 1960, one for Vice President and the other for his old Senate seat, and he polled 138,693 votes more for the Senate than he did for Vice President. These people had not forgiven Mr. Johnson for joining a man they considered his junior in experience and ability, and they continued to resent his having relinquished real power in the Senate for the weaker Vice Presidency.

In the spring of 1961 Texas had sent a Republican to the Senate for the first time in 84 years. I had returned to private business in Fort Worth after the 1960 campaign and then President Kennedy appointed me to head the Navy. But in late 1961, I came home to run for governor.

My opponents immediately tagged me with a mean slogan: "L.B.J.—Lyndon's Boy John." The irony here was that the Vice President had urged me *not* to run. He was always oriented to federal service and I remember him saying bluntly, "Why, I think you're crazy to give up a Cabinet post." He predicted that I would be branded a tool of the Administration and, indeed, in the general election in the fall of 1962, so unpopular was the Kennedy administration in Texas that my Republican opponent hardly ran against me at all but against Washington.

There was no appropriate time in 1962 for me to host a presidential visit and I had continued to ignore, as best I could, the barrage of hints coming down from Washington that the President wanted a Texas visit. They began early in the year, when I had just started my own campaign in the first primary, with six candidates including the incumbent governor in the race and my first poll giving me only 4% support. In Texas one-party politics, you must understand, we don't have a powerful party structure that raises funds and focuses support. Every Democrat runs on his own, builds his own organization, raises his own funds. I was desperately try-

ing to pay for my own campaign and to rally support, and the last thing I wanted was a national attempt for support or political money.

The urgings from Washington had continued through 1962. I finished first in the primary, won the runoff and then the general election. Then I had a bare 60 days to assemble a staff and prepare for a legislative program which I had to see through in early 1963.

I had not intended to delay President Kennedy indefinitely. We admitted the obligation and knew we would honor it eventually. There was nothing to prevent him from visiting Texas. Obviously, he could have come whenever he chose. But he wanted me to plan the visit—wanted me deeply involved in the money-raising. I think he felt that I was more in touch with the elements from which he needed help than any other man in Texas.

And he did need help, for though it is largely forgotten now, the whole country did not consider President Kennedy very successful then. The disenchantment with the Administration was not limited to Texas. The President had recovered somewhat from the Bay of Pigs, but it had not been forgotten. He had stirred people with his *élan* and his eloquence, and he had brought a renewed sense of purpose and a quickening of interest in culture and government; but his programs were stalled in Congress, which I think felt no mandate from the people to pass them. That meant that although his plans were fine, his results were slight.

This was widely recognized then. A Gallup poll in October 1963 put him at his lowest ebb and David Lawrence quoted the President's own fears of defeat. James Reston of the *New York Times* thought those fears unreasonable but reported "doubt and disappointment" among the voters, adding that "people don't quite believe in him."

And he had alarmed business. This was reaction partly to his handling of the steel price rollback, but even more to his concept of the need for change. People are cautious of change in comfortable times, and businessmen particularly so. Businessmen were suspicious of him and, though it irritated him and he thought it unwarranted, it was still true.

What's more, while the trip represented work, trouble and some risk for me, I also knew that I could expect little of the benefit that state officials usually get from a President's prestige. Many of the people who were Mr. Kennedy's most active supporters in Texas also tended to support my opponent. Many of my most active supporters did not lean toward Mr. Kennedy. To rally new support for him and to raise funds, therefore, I would have to appeal to my supporters—literally, to expend my political capital—while knowing that in the election of 1964, in which I too had to run again, many of Mr. Kennedy's supporters would be fighting me. On the other hand, if I couldn't rally support for my own party's President in my own state, it would be a political embarrassment that I would not be allowed to forget.

Article continued on page 100A
Photographs on next 11 pages

Kennedy wanted to raise funds and meet the opposition

This was the situation in June 1963, when I went to the President's suite in El Paso and for the first time he asked me directly to help. I agreed. Most of my reasons for delaying the proposed trip were past: I had successfully gone through three elections and healed some of the wounds. I had stepped into the governorship and had seen my program through the legislature.

The President nodded and said that he had been thinking about four fund-raising dinners or meetings—in Houston, San Antonio, Fort Worth and Dallas. I was still gulping at the idea of four dinners when he went on blithely to say that he thought Mr. Johnson's birthday, Aug. 27, might provide a logical date and reason for the trip. I'm sure Mr. Johnson appreciated as well as I did the futility of the early date, but I think he was prepared to let me carry the ball for a while.

"Well, Mr. President," I said, "you know my feelings for Vice President Johnson, but I must tell you that the very people you will want to reach are likely not to be here—Texas gets mighty hot in August."

"If you don't like that date, what date do you like?" the President asked.

I wasn't prepared to offer an immediate alternative and the President said, still in a friendly but definitely businesslike fashion, "Well, let's get on with it. We've been talking about this for a year and a half or more. Let's get an agreement about what we are going to do and get together and start making our plans."

For some time thereafter, I gave a great deal of thought to the President's visit. I should say that, once we began, I never looked back; I was fully ready to go ahead. But I was anxious to see that it went off well and the first move to that end was to drop the plan for four dinners. I felt there should be one dinner and that it should be held not in any of the four cities the President suggested, but in Austin, the state capital, which is a smaller city, centrally located and traditionally considered neutral ground in Texas. It was the only place to which people from other Texas cities would come with no feeling of rivalry. Fort Worth people would resist supporting a Dallas dinner, or Dallas a Houston dinner. But they would all come to Austin.

On Oct. 4, 1963, I was to be in Washington, and now, with firm ideas on what the visit should be, I asked for an appointment with President Kennedy. He came from behind his desk in the Oval Office with outstretched hand, then sat down in his rocker, gestured me to one of his two small couches

and moved immediately into the subject.

"How about those fund-raising affairs in Texas, John?" he asked. "Mr. President," I said, "we can have four separate affairs, but I think it would be a very serious mistake." He didn't answer immediately and I went right on. "In the first place, I don't think four will raise appreciably more money than one properly organized affair—certainly not enough to make up for the political cost to you. You haven't made a real visit to Texas—except to El Paso—since you became President. You've made no speeches and no appearances. If you come down there and try to have fund-raising affairs in four cities on one trip, they are going to think you are trying to financially rape the state." I used just those words.

"I'm inclined to agree with you," the President said.

"Mr. President," I said, "what really do you want to do on the trip?"

In addition to the fund-raising, he said, he wanted to see and talk to some of the Texas people who opposed him so sharply. I think it galled him that conservative business people would suspect that he, a wealthy product himself of our capitalistic system, would do anything to damage that system. He added with some heat, "They don't have any reason to fear my administration."

I had a strong conviction that if the business community of Texas could see President Kennedy in the flesh and talk to him, it would find quickly enough that he was no extremist. I told him now, "If you come down there to try to convert some of the more conservative people who have been against you or at least lukewarm, you are going to have to be with them and talk with them, and it is going to have to be done in a basically non-political setting, because a lot of these people just won't come to a straight political meeting. What's more, these are the people who are going to supply the funds you need."

Texans are a courteous and hospitable people. That portion of the business element which distrusted President Kennedy would have felt neither desire nor obligation to attend an event hung around support of the national party. But I knew those same men would count it a point of pride and honor to entertain and welcome the President if he appeared as President instead of politician.

And I went on, "Now I hope you can give us two days—time for an affair in Houston, something in San Antonio, a breakfast in Fort Worth, a luncheon in Dallas and the dinner in Austin. This dinner will be at \$100 a plate and will be strictly political—but the rest of

it should be nonpartisan. It will leave a good taste in everyone's mouth, it will enhance your prestige with all of Texas and it will help you with the business community you're interested in reaching."

"I'll accept your judgment on that, John," he said. I told him I believed he would carry Texas in 1964, though it might be close. "I would anticipate that," he said. "Lyndon thinks we'll carry Texas, but he says it will be hard." The thought irked him; Texas is Democratic country: "We shouldn't have a hard race in Texas!"

I suggested that if the trip was successful, his problems might be considerably eased and then I ventured that I thought it would help a great deal if Mrs. Kennedy accompanied him. She had not previously gone on essentially political trips. She had captured the imagination of the country and particularly of the women, she had come to stand for culture, beauty and fashion—her hair style and her wardrobe were news. The wives of the men he wanted to attract would be most interested in seeing Mrs. Kennedy, and her presence would make the trip seem less politically oriented. The President nodded. Mrs. Kennedy was in Europe then, he said, but on her return he would ask her. I recall he said, "I agree with you. I would hope that she would come."

I was having dinner that night at the home of Vice President Johnson and when I arrived he had already learned that I had been with the President. He was distinctly irritated. He greeted me: "Well, did you all get the trip all worked out?" I said yes and he said, "I guess you think I have no interest in the state of Texas or in this visit." I pointed out that I could hardly instruct the President as to his White House visitors, but Mr. Johnson was not mollified: "Well, I hope you know that I've got a slight interest in Texas and in this trip, too." I regretted my thoughtlessness in not discussing the plans with him, and I apologized.

I went back to Texas, called in my associates and began the extraordinary planning that a successful presidential trip requires. There is no end to the detail that must be mastered, always with the knowledge that a single point overlooked can snarl a trip so hopelessly as to ruin it. It's easy to fall behind schedule—but a rule of working politics is that if a candidate falls an hour behind schedule, he might as well not have come. The people who've waited to see him will become irritated and resentful, and his message falls flat. Then it is all for nothing.

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A heated argument over the motorcade

Soon the Secret Service men were in Texas and behind them came the President's own advance men, sent down from Washington by the White House to oversee all the arrangements. Just as I had anticipated, trouble began almost immediately.

It lay in the great schism in Democratic politics in Texas, in a personal feud that grew in turn from a political feud that is even older. It had nothing whatsoever to do with the President's trip to Texas except that in a tiresome fashion it complicated some of the arrangements. But later, after the tragic ending of the trip, it was to assume huge and distorted proportions.

For a number of years Ralph Yarborough, now senior senator from Texas, had been in violent controversy with Mr. Johnson and with the majority of the state's Democratic leadership. The senator's support came generally from arch liberals and labor, and he had run three exhausting, expensive campaigns for governor in the 1950s before he managed to win his seat in the Senate. It is hard to describe the bitterness that such campaigns generate in a state in which each individual must rally and hold his own support instead of relying on a party structure. I would not attempt to chronicle here the claims of betrayal and the counterclaims of perfidy that infested those times, but it was clear that Senator Yarborough was and remained the enemy of Mr. Johnson, while they were both in the Senate and after Mr. Johnson became Vice President.

Since there was a constant clash between Mr. Johnson and Senator Yarborough on patronage matters, President Kennedy was entirely aware of the situation. Much later it was suggested that the purpose of the President's trip was to settle this tiresome old feud. The idea is ridiculous. First, both men operated in Washington, not in Texas. One was across the street from the President and one was less than a mile away, and Washington would have been the place to settle it. Second, Presidents never insert themselves into such quarrels, for they can only get hurt. Third, the President couldn't have settled it anyway; the quarrel is implacable.

The trouble began—and though irritating, I would not say that it was serious—when Senator Yarborough started to urge changes in the planning onto the President's advance men, who in turn tried to force the changes onto me. They wanted to give the President more crowd exposure and less of the exposure I believed he needed and, from our conversation in the White House, believed he wanted. My essentially nonpolitical focus on the businessmen, who have power in politics partly through the money they contribute but even more through their influence in their communities, did indeed tend to cut out some of the President's most ardent supporters. He could have had, for instance, the type of trip that involves great public rallies, and receptions for labor, intense liberals, leaders of the

minority groups. But speaking politically, I felt that his trip should primarily aim not at those who already supported him, but at those who did not.

We went right ahead with the planning. A decision to dedicate the Aerospace Medical Center at Brooks AFB in San Antonio on Thursday, Nov. 21 would serve as the nonpolitical reason for his coming. The motorcade through downtown San Antonio, which always produces good crowds, would solve his public exposure. He agreed to speak at an appreciation dinner for Albert Thomas, the veteran Democratic congressman. It was not ideal from our point of view, but many of the dinner guests were powers in Houston business and we would be getting the basic exposure we wanted. In Fort Worth we set up a breakfast with the Chamber of Commerce and in Dallas a luncheon with influential, nonpartisan citizens' groups.

Then, having shown the business community that the President did not have horns and a tail, he would move into straight politics. He would go into Austin for a big political reception, receive the Texas legislature in the governor's mansion, and go on to the \$100-a-plate dinner.

The plans for the Austin meeting suggest how complicated these matters become. Secret Service men had to check the hotel where the first reception would be held, the mansion and the hall for the dinner. The route the President would drive was checked and timed. Arrangements for the first reception were made. The mansion is not big enough to handle all the legislators at once, so we arranged to receive them in two shifts—and there was only an hour on the tight schedule, which meant half-hour shifts, which meant no refreshments would be served because one group had to be herded out as the next came in. A caterer took over the banquet—3,000 steaks, each 16 ounces and well cooked, to be served hot approximately at once; potatoes, vegetables, several different kinds of wine, desserts, all the equipment and the people to handle it—and then there were the decorations, the sound system, the lighting, the furnishings.

These dinners are ticklish: they must be well done so that the purchaser of a \$100 ticket feels he's been entertained, but not so lavish that he thinks his political contribution is being wasted. Then there is the program, who will speak and for how long. There are the seating arrangements—who will be at the head of the table, who will sit closest and who farthest. Political contributors, in effect, are politicians. They have their own influence to protect. They consider themselves important and have definite ideas of how they

should be treated. Handling such a dinner becomes an exercise in diplomacy.

Thus we came to the final week in a welter of detail, confusion and change. Enthusiasm was weak and ticket sales lagged. I manned a battery of long-distance phones for two nights and personally sold more than \$50,000 worth. Frequently I had to ask the purchaser to take them as a favor to me.

President Kennedy's own advance men continued to press for greater public exposure of the President in what amounted to fundamental disagreement on the purpose of the trip. In Fort Worth, for instance, they scheduled an outdoor speech in a parking lot across from the President's hotel. But the biggest change and, as it turned out, the saddest and most disastrous took place in Dallas. The Washington advance men wanted a motorcade. I wanted to skip the motorcade and go directly to the Trade Mart for luncheon. There was a heated argument over this between the President's advance people and my planning staff in Dallas.

My point was that motorcades are exhausting. This may seem surprising, but it is true. You sit there with all eyes focused on you. The wind blows and ruffles your wife's hair. You wave and smile, just enough to look interested, not enough to look foolish. Block after block you maintain this quality of giving yourself, in what amounts to thousands upon thousands of minute human encounters, and I think it has a powerful psychic drain. On that single day, Friday, the President was scheduled to make two speeches in Fort Worth, an important luncheon speech in Dallas, appear at two receptions in Austin, and then give his most significant speech of all at the fund-raising dinner that night. People know when the speaker is tired and not giving his best. I wanted President Kennedy rested and in good spirits, not exhausted. But in the end, I was overruled. The President's advance men, on the scene in Dallas, laid out the motorcade through the heart of downtown. Then they released the route itself for publication in the Tuesday newspapers—a full three days before the event.

All of these differences were settled and almost forgotten, however, by the early afternoon of Thursday, Nov. 21, 1963, when President and Mrs. Kennedy landed at San Antonio. I believed that the trip would be smooth and successful: he would see an excellent cross section of Texas, would be warmly welcomed by the people and would raise more than \$300,000—half of which would stay in Texas. All the planning and the myriad details were settled. The governor's mansion, for instance, was spotless in

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Rousing receptions on the way to Dallas

anticipation of the reception at which the President would meet the legislators on Friday night, before the Austin dinner. And then, at the last moment, my wife, Nellie, decided that the rugs were not quite right and had them cleaned all over again.

Nellie and I met the President and his wife with real elation. I had been governor for less than 11 months and this was the first time I had been host to the President of the United States; it had all the responsibilities and all the pleasures, I thought, of having him to one's home. There is a great air that surrounds the Presidency, of excitement and even glamor, and I think this infected us all. Nellie had flown over from Austin and I had come from Houston, where I had made a speech. Vice President and Mrs. Johnson landed first and we awaited the President together.

When Air Force One stopped and the doors opened, I recall that Mrs. Kennedy came out first. She was a stunning figure in white, and then the President appeared, looking tanned and fit, smiling, bareheaded. A great roar went up from the crowd at the airport.

The Vice President greeted them and then I said, "Welcome to Texas, Mr. President." He smiled and put out his hand and said, "John, how are you?" in that New England tone, and I said, "We are just delighted and we are happy to see you here." And that was the truth. This was climax to all the plans and preparations, and we were prepared to enjoy it.

We got into the cars and started into San Antonio. Nellie and I were on the jump seats of the President's car and I remember a tumult of thoughts—I was host for my state and I wanted it and its people to perform well, and at the same time I was presenting the President to my state and I wanted him to be happy and to respond well. So I was awaiting with interest and perhaps a little apprehension the tone of the crowds.

San Antonio was marvelous. The crowds were big and warm, and there were cries of "Viva Kennedy." Mrs. Kennedy seemed a trifle unsure of herself, but many of the shouts and the signs were directed to her and she responded graciously. The President's speech at the Medical Center was good and well received, and when we were back in Air Force One on the way to Houston, he obviously was pleased. Nellie and I rode in his cabin and he twirled on his big chair and asked if we would do as well in Houston. There was the jubilant air of a successful start.

We were less certain of the reception in Houston. People are so widely dispersed in Texas that there is no way to manufacture crowds; they come or they don't. We did, however, manage to put the President's motorcade down the Gulf Freeway at about 5 p.m. when the homeward-bound cars would be a solid river. But it was an unnecessary precaution. The crowds in Houston were just as warm and friendly as they had been in

San Antonio, though we were not in an actual parade.

That night, the President got a rousing ovation from the crowd at the Albert Thomas dinner when he strode in. He had eaten at the hotel beforehand since, like most major speakers, he did not like to eat at the dinner at which he spoke. It was a good speech, short as always, burnished with clever touches, and it was very successful. I'll confess that I don't listen with full attention at such events—I watch the crowd for the little signs that are the real indicators of one's success. And the reaction that night, from men who represent the backbone of Houston, was very good. They were attentive, friendly, ready to be pleased, and they applauded enthusiastically.

We flew on Thursday night to Fort Worth, more subdued now, everyone on the plane tired. It was near midnight when we landed at Carswell AFB and there was a light drizzle, but even so there were little knots of people standing in the darkness and waving as the President's closed car passed. There was a big crowd at the Texas Hotel and the lobby was packed with cheering people. The President worked his way through them smoothly, smiling and nodding, and caught the elevator.

After I had taken Nellie to our suite I went down to the coffee shop for scrambled eggs and a glass of milk. Fort Worth was home and I knew most of the people in the coffee shop. They all were discussing the Yarborough incident. It seemed that on two occasions that day, in San Antonio and again in Houston, Senator Yarborough had refused publicly to ride with Vice President Johnson. It was an affront to the office of the Vice President and it was just the sort of lively thing that attracts the press. I knew there would be a stir in the morning papers.

On Friday morning before the breakfast affair I saw President Kennedy waiting to make his entrance after everyone else was seated. He was sitting on one of a row of straight chairs and he beckoned me over. "John," he said, "did you know that Yarborough refused to ride with Lyndon yesterday?" I said I did, and he said, "What's the matter with that fellow?" I said I didn't know, and a cold, exceedingly firm look came over President Kennedy's face. "I'll tell you one thing," he said. "He'll ride with him today or he'll walk."

A few minutes later the President was seen in conversation with Senator Yarborough. The President was doing the talking and the senator the listening, and when we left Fort Worth at midmorning, Senator Yarborough rode with Mr. Johnson. They rode together again in Dallas.

It was an unpleasant incident, but quite minor. After the assassination, when everything that had happened became important and much talked about, it came to seem significant. I think there is no doubt that this fed the gradual growth of the public impression that the President went to Texas to settle a feud. He did require Senator Yarborough to pay Mr. Johnson the simple courtesy of riding in a car with him, but there was no more to it than that.

It was still drizzling in Fort Worth that morning, but the President appeared in good spirits. He seemed to have slept well. The Secret Service had selected his suite, one that was rather plainly furnished but had only one door. Contrary to reports made much later that it was dingy and poor, the hotel had renovated it. What's more, a committee had gathered from private homes all over Fort Worth a collection of great paintings worth, I suppose, nearly a million dollars—a Picasso, I remember, and a Monet, a Van Gogh and many others—to hang in the suite. Before President Kennedy came down that morning he called Mrs. J. Lee Johnson III, who had assembled it, and thanked her.

Again his speeches—at breakfast to the Chamber of Commerce and to the public in the parking lot across the street from the hotel—were strong and laced with a pleasant touch of fun. He certainly impressed the Fort Worth Chamber members, just as I had anticipated. We flew the few miles to Dallas at about 11 a.m. and while we were still airborne he looked out the window and said with a smile, "Our luck is holding. It looks as if we'll get sunshine."

And indeed, when we landed it was a whole different day. The clouds were gone and the sun was crisp and brilliant. Texas has magnificent weather in the fall and now, in this most crucial of Texas cities, we were being favored. There was an overpowering sense of success and I know that President Kennedy felt it, too.

I had been worried about Dallas, fearing not violence but embarrassment. An ugly advertisement had run that very morning in the *Dallas Morning News*. A month before, United Nations Ambassador Adlai Stevenson had been hit on the head by a picket sign. There had been the 1960 attack on Senator Johnson in which he was jostled and spat at by Nixon supporters. I was afraid of rude signs or that the crowds might be hostile or, what is almost as bad, apathetic or sullen. I had objected to the parade route being announced well in advance because that lends itself to organized heckling.

But as we neared downtown about noon

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and the crowds thickened, all my fears fell away. The people were friendly, waving, smiling, calling his name and Mrs. Kennedy's name. They were out in huge numbers long before we got into the center of the city, and it was plain that the President was enjoying himself.

We saw only one unfortunate sign. It read, I believe, "Kennedy Go Home!" He nudged my shoulder and gestured with his thumb. "See that sign, John?" he asked. I said that I had and that I had hoped he hadn't. He grinned. "I see them everywhere I go," he said, adding with an edge of sarcasm, "I bet that's a nice guy."

At another point where the crowds slackened momentarily, he asked, "John, how do things look in Texas?" He had been warmed by the crowds and the success, and his political interest was quickening.

"There'll be a *Houston Chronicle* poll out tomorrow," I said, "which should give us some ideas."

"What's it going to show?" he asked.

"I think it will show that you can carry the state, but that it will be a close election."

"Oh? How will it show you running?"

"Mr. President," I said, "I think it will show me running a little ahead of you."

"That doesn't surprise me," he said, and that was the last conversation we had. We

came back into heavy crowds then and, of course, you cannot talk in the car at such times, for the people who have come to see you realize your interest is not with them and they resent it. Because we spent so much of our time together in motorcades, the fact is I didn't talk to the President a great deal.

There was a bright glitter to the sunshine and after a while Mrs. Kennedy slipped on a big pair of sunglasses. When the President looked around, he said in a low voice, "Take off your glasses, Jackie." She had no way of knowing, but glasses are nearly as effective as a mask for hiding one's face and make participation in a parade almost useless. In a moment, forgetting perhaps, she slipped them back on and I heard him say in the same tone, "Take off the glasses, Jackie."

He was watching the crowds, waving at them steadily with a stiff forearm, his right hand moving only a few inches, out from his face and back. It was a small movement and curiously formal but, I thought, quite effective. I heard a low monotone rumble from the back and then I realized he was responding—"Thank you, thank you, thank you"—over and over to people who couldn't hear him but who could sense he was answering them, who knew that contact had been made. And then he turned his head slightly and said, "Jackie, take off your glasses."

And the crowd was wild. We passed a school and the children surged into the street, so excited they were shaking my hand, too. In the downtown city, people were in the streets and packing the sidewalks clear back to the buildings. They were hanging out of windows 10 stories up, waving banners and signs. They were smiling, laughing, pointing, waving, shrieking greetings. Some schools were out and the young girls would surge into the street in front of his car and pandemonium would break. It was an incredible show, directed as much at Mrs. Kennedy as at him, and I had the feeling she was relaxing, unending, learning to enjoy it.

This was the final success and the last of my worry evaporated. The people on the street were his. The business community whose help he needed had been impressed and would be more so at the luncheon that day and at Austin that night. The President looked strong and confident, obviously delighted with his reception. Nellie leaned back between the jump seats and said proudly over the crowd's roar, "You can't say now that Dallas doesn't love you, Mr. President," and he smiled and nodded. The big car turned off Main Street and slowly negotiated the turn under the looming School Book Depository building and started down the hill in the bright sunshine.

With Governor Connally and Vice President Johnson, President Kennedy speaks in Fort Worth hours before he was killed

